

709 1/2 BULLITT AVENUE (House)
Jeannette
Westmoreland County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-6100

HABS
PA
65-JEAN,
47-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
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ADDENDUM TO:
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240-0001

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

709 ½ BULLITT AVENUE (HOUSE)

HABS No. PA-6100

- LOCATION: 709 ½ Bullitt Avenue, Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania
- SIGNIFICANCE: A high concentration of window, tableware, bottle and specialty glass plants distinguished Jeannette as “The Glass City” early in its history. Significant housing stock consists of company-built row and detached double houses, and several privately constructed dwellings.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Charles Rosenberg of nearby Greensburg first purchased this parcel, including the front half of the lot along Bullitt Avenue, in 1889. Though the lot was directly across from the McKee Glass Works, it remained undeveloped by three subsequent owners until Angelina Masaero purchased it in 1915. By March 1916, both a yellow-brick veneered, gable front house facing Bullitt Avenue and this red brick rear building had been constructed. Masaero sold both houses to Louis Gagliardi in 1919. Following two additional short-term owners, Bessie Mathias purchased both houses, the front house in 1924 and the rear one in 1927. A year later, she was living in the rear house with her son George while two families (Joseph Bayot and his wife Valere and Marcel Bayot and his wife Rita) lived in the front at No. 709. Mrs. Harris died in 1943, and her daughter and son-in-law, Harry and Bessie Donnelly, held the property until 1952. Following two later out-of-town owners, the current owner William J. Ross purchased the rear building alone in 1975.

The Ross family, which included Tony, Florence, and their four children, had moved here in August 1943 from a nearby house on Bullitt Avenue. Florence Ross was the daughter of the former Colombe Hotel owners John and Margaret Fath, and she had met and married Tony Ross when he was working at the hotel. Tony helped run the hotel during the 1920s while it still belonged to the Faths. He later was a bartender at Manfredo's Hotel. He went into the beer distribution business with his son Bill in 1946, where he worked until his death in 1950. His wife Florence died the following year. Three of the Ross' children lived here in the 1950s, and two (Bill and Mary Ann) still live in the house. After working in the beer distribution business, Bill worked for a short time at the J.H. Millstein glass company and then for the Elliot Co. until his death in 1984. During the war, Mary Ann worked in the window house making glass for periscopes and military windshields.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

This building is one of only two surviving examples of what was once a common early feature of the neighborhood: rear residential buildings. The initial house was a two-bay by two-bay two-story rectangular structure built directly on the alley with a porch on the interior side of the lot. The exterior material of this 1916 house is brick, while the foundation is glazed concrete block. A two-story, wood frame addition was built on the side opposite of the alley prior to 1925. The original house had a living room and a kitchen/dining room on the first floor, with two bedrooms and a small bath, toilet, and sink only above. With the addition, a kitchen was added along with a side sun parlor on the lower floor along with the original living and dining rooms. The upstairs has three bedrooms and a full bath.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Insurance Maps of Jeannette, Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Company, 1916, 1925.

Deed Books. Recorder of Deeds, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, 176/47, 186/657, 220/58, 232/430, 565/562, 638/548, 754/408, 780/436, 789/514, 839/286, 1209/29, 1461/230, 1946/109, 2000/152, 2184/397.

City Directories, 1897, 1913, 1923, 1928, 1948, 1960.

Tax Assessment Books. Westmoreland County Tax Assessment Office, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

Interview, William and Mary Ann Ross, residents, 709 ½ Bullitt Avenue, and grandchildren of Colombe Hotel owners John and Maggie Fath, August 20, 1990.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

In February 1987, the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) and the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) began a multi-year historical and architectural documentation project in southwestern Pennsylvania. Carried out in conjunction with America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), HABS and HAER undertook a comprehensive documentation of Jeannette, documenting industries, housing and cultural institutions.